Learn to Call, Y'all! – A 7 Session Callers Workshop

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Sponsored by FOOTMAD and the Country Dance and Song Society (CDSS)
Handout created by Robbin Marcus

Why does one want to be a caller?

- To grow as a dancer in understanding of music and dance geometry.
- To spread the joy of dance to new communities.
- To provide entertainment for social groups: churches, scouts, schools, etc.
- To have fun providing fun.
- To promote a greater understanding of a true American folk art.

What skills does one need?

- To be a better-than-average dancer who dances all of the standard basic figures correctly and in time with the music.
- Exposure to many different callers and calling styles.
- Patience!!!
- A willingness to practice often and everywhere you can.
- An ability to risk making mistakes in public.
- A sense of humor.
- A clear, concise teaching style.
- The ability to communicate instructions clearly and using terminology all dancers (including beginners) will understand.
- A command of rhythm and a love of music.

How to develop knowledge and background:

- Learn dances by dancing them.
- Observe and listen carefully to other callers. Record dances (with the permission of caller and musicians.)
- Use resources like recordings with and without calls, and YouTube videos to observe and hear others calling and dancing.
- If you find dances in books, dance them at home with friends to make sure they flow and work for you before calling them in public.
- Practice calling for:
  - Yourself (to dance with imaginary partners)
  - Groups of friends who are willing to help you out
  - Open mike nights (ie Tuesday dances)
  - House parties or self-staffed dance camps
- Have a system for notating calls and dances.
- Attend lots of workshops in many types of dance to gain a sense of the interconnectedness of the art.

Nothing Is Predictable at a Dance!

Variables under the caller's control:

- How well do I know the dances I want to call
- What is my teaching style going to be for: a particular dance? The evening?
- How will I plan a program for this evening?
- Sequence of dances:
  - What music will fit the dances I choose?
  - How do I plan alternative dances if my program is too easy or hard?
  - What information can I find out in advance about the band and the type of music they play best?

Variables you may need to cope with cheerfully:

- Inexperienced band, or band which only plays one type of tune.
- Inadequate sound equipment, or lousy soundperson.
  - Consider getting yourself some sound training, "just in case."
- A roomful of new dancers who show up because of good publicity for the event.
- Dancers under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- A slippery or sticky floor, etc. (ie Dust, wax, cement)

Knowing your stuff:

- Understanding musical phrasing - what is a 32-bar tune?
- Types of tunes - jigs, reels, etc.
- How many beats does each move of this dance take?
- When to start calling (on the "odds.")
- How many beats does a call take?
- When do I stop calling? How?

[redacted]

Understanding the Music

- The structure of the 32-bar tune has 16 beats per phrase. Each phrase feels "punctuated" after 8 beats, as follows:

A1	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8, 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8;
A2	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8, 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8.
B1	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8, 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8;
B2	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8, 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8!

  - Each measure (or bar) has 2 beats (or counts).
  - Eight bars have sixteen beats.
  - Thirty-two bars have sixty-four beats.

Types of Music

- There are two basic types of music used for American folk dance (contras, circles and squares).
- Tunes are generally called either jigs or reels.
- The structure of the tune is the same – the feeling is completely different.

4/4 tunes:

- **Reels** - A reel has two beats per measure and is subdivided in a feeling of 8 sixteenth notes per bar. It is the fastest feeling of the 4/4 tunes, creating a mood that is energetic or busy.

- **Marches** - A march is more relaxed and/or stately than a reel. The pace is slower and often uses quarter or eighth notes. Think "Yankee Doodle"

- **Polkas** - Also generally less busy. Not used as often. Think "This Old Man".

6/8 tunes:

- **Jigs** - Jigs also have the feeling of 2 beats per measure, but the subdivision is in 6 eighth notes. Jigs can be either single or double jigs. Single jigs have less notes and are statelier and smoother. Double jigs are more energetic and livelier.
  - Jigs are sometimes classified as "bouncier" than reels - inexperienced dancers and children want to skip to this music.

Understanding the Dance Structure

- All traditional dance forms have a structure. This structure assists callers and dancer in learning the dance.

- **Contra dance structure matches that of the tunes.**
  - The dance form is usually AABB.
  - This structure has 4 main parts, divided into two smaller parts of 8 beats each.
  - The average contra dance contains between 4 and 8 different figures.
  - Hopefully, dancers take 64 steps each time they dance the full dance.

- **American circle dances usually mimic contra dances.** Set dances or circle dances from other countries may have their own tunes which change the length of the dance to fit the specific tunes.

- **Square dances consist of figures and the breaks between them.**
  - In Southern or Western style, a break may follow every figure of the dance. What matters is that most moves are 8 or sixteen counts. Entire dance figures may not "fit" the structure of a 32-bar tune, nor does it matter. Old time musicians will usually stop in the middle of a phrase if you end the dance there.
  - In New England square dance style, the format is usually Intro, figure, figure, break, figure, figure, ending. Often, these dances are also structured to fit a 32-bar tune, although it is not imperative that they do.
  - Callers usually improvise additional moves if they "get off" the music to enable the dance to end at the end of the tune.
  - Breaks are useful tools in all types of square dancing to reorganize the set if a group is having trouble with the figures, or if the caller is really "off" the music.

Examining Individual Figures

- Each figure takes a certain number of beats to complete. Here are some common figures:

Circle - 8 counts	Balance - 4 counts
Do si do - 8 counts	Circle ¾ - 6 counts
Ladies chain over - 8 counts	Swing - 4,8,12 or 16 counts
Allemande - 4 or 8 counts	Pass thru - 2 or 4 counts

  - If you're not sure how many counts a figure takes, put on some music and dance it around your living room! Count while you dance.

Phrasing and Timing

To phrase your calling properly, begin calling on odd numbered beats.

- New England calls often begin on beat 5 or 7 - usually on 5 near the beginning of the dance, shortening to 7 as the dancers memorize the figures.
- Southern and Western patter calls often begin on beat 1 or beat 5. As you start out, it is a good idea to follow this rule routinely.
- Please remember though, that as you grow as a caller, there can be many exceptions to this rule. Let the music be your guide and "bend" your calls to fit the phrases, as a musician would vary the tune in a dance band.

Be sure you know how many beats it takes to dance the figures that you call.

- To put the next call in its proper place, you must estimate when a figure will end.
  - In contra dancing, if the dancers aren't getting there in time, the music may be too fast or the dancers may be trying to embellish too much. If the former, talk to the band! If the latter, the next time you teach the dance, you may want to note the lack of time for embellishments to the dancers. Some of them might listen!
  - In square dances, this timing can vary due to the condition of the floor, dance style, size of the square, etc. As you watch the dancers, be sure to give them the time they need to finish a move. You can "square" with the music later by adding a swing or another figure.

The phrasing of your calling is what pulls it all together.

- Larry Edelman says, "We are one with fourness - think in fours." Your phrasing will unite the music and the movement.
- To ensure that the dance flows from one movement to the next, phrase your call just before the dancers finish the previous figure. (On good old beat 5 or 7)
- Remember to experiment and practice with your phrasing - it is what will make your calling distinctive from anyone else. Listen to tapes of callers you like and see what makes their phrasing work for them!

To develop phrasing and practice calling

- Listen to recordings of other callers, studying the words and placement of the calls.
- Practice calling along with the callers on the recordings (in private).
- Try calling to a recording that has music, but no calls (in private).
- When you are ready, ask a group of patient, cheerful friends over for an evening of dancing to your calling. Ask for and expect critique! Do this as often as possible until you feel ready to call in public.
- Begin your public calling as a guest of another caller at their dance. Consider finding an open mike dance where you can call just one or two dances.

Communication

Clarity of Speech:

- Speak clearly and enunciate all consonants.
- Don't rush.
- Project, but don't shout.
- Avoid "sing-song" tones when chanting calls.
- Emphasize and accent important words, ie "*do-si-do* your *partners* all", or "with your *corner* allemande *left.*"
- Increase the volume of some words to vary your delivery.

Gaining (and holding) Dancers' Attention:

- Try speaking softer instead of louder.
- Make use of the "pregnant pause" - ie "the dance begins by.....
- Tee the dancers what to do - don't ask them! Remember, you're in charge.
- Use phrases while teaching such as "this is the tricky part of the dance, so listen carefully."
- Vary the style of your delivery - sing, shout, whisper, etc.
- Don't blather on. The dancers came to dance, not to listen to a lecture.

Weaning Dancers from Your Calls (in contras or circles):

- Begin with leaving out the most obvious move of the dance - often a partner swing.
- Next time, leave out another move. If the dancers are ok, proceed to leave out another each time. You'll know if you have stopped too soon!
- Moves like "long lines forward and back" after an 8-count swing may need to be prompted for a much longer time.
- Particularly dizzy or difficult dances may need at least one or two key moves prompted for the duration of the dance.
- Don't be afraid to stop calling. Many callers never stop because they fear the dancers won't be able to do it without them. Let go and see what happens!
- On the other hand, with beginners, plan to call a lot more than with experienced dancers.

Teaching Skills

Teaching and calling are 2 different skills. Each one takes practice.
Planning your teaching ahead of time when you plan your program will make your evening easier and help the dance to flow seamlessly for the dancers.

Amounts of teaching will vary depending upon the ability level of dancers.

- For experienced dancers:
  - Keep walk thrus short and to the point.
  - Demonstrate any particularly unusual or difficult moves or, talk through carefully if a demo is not possible.
- For intermediate or mixed-level dancers:
  - Teach enough to keep beginners at a good comfort level.
  - Balance the amount of teaching needed for beginners with the patience level of experienced dancers.

Remember that a demonstration (using your experienced people) is worth a thousand words.

Be sure that experienced dancers demonstrate moves such as courtesy turns without embellishments.

- Encourage them to dance this way when meeting beginners on the floor.
- Encourage experienced dancers to ask new dancers to dance.

Plan your evening by considering which moves you do and don't want to spend time teaching. *(For example, it's possible to do an entire evening without ever encountering a robins chain!)*

- Begin your dance by getting everyone moving with the simplest dance you know.
- Add only one or two new moves per dance.
- Variations on earlier dances are often useful for building skills during an evening.

Choose your words carefully.

- Find the most expedient method for teaching figures. Practice on friends as if they were total beginners. Could a complete beginner follow what you said?
- When you find words that work, stick with them.
- Don't make things more complex than they really are.
- Remember, the dancers came to have fun! Communicate patience, understanding and good humor - even when you're frustrated beyond belief.
- If a dance doesn't work, it's always the caller's fault. Reasons for failure may be varied, but don't take it personally! Laugh it off and find another dance that works. Then go home and try to figure out what happened!

Do's and Don'ts of Teaching:

DO

- Teach only as much as you have to.
- Keep it active.
- Consult your notes before teaching to help you remember "the fine points."
- Use English, not "dancerese". Explain terms such as "contra corners" or "hey" so that all will understand.
- Have fun!

DON'T

- Single out a dancer or a group of dancers. (unless they're waving for help)
- "read" a dance from your cards while calling.
- Teach a dance you don't know. Bob Dalsemer says, "Don't call a dance you haven't danced yourself."
- Forget it's ok to make mistakes.
- Forget to laugh!

Other points:

- Remember that dance transitions may be the most difficult. Single out the parts of the dance which may cause the most trouble and teach them in isolation, then walk through the dance as a sequence.

- Remember that a walk-thru is not the same as teaching. Sometimes one is needed, sometimes the other, sometimes both!

- If your eyes are on your cards, you're not watching the floor. Watch the floor carefully for instant feedback, then put the cards down for good after you teach.

- Reassure dancers by telling them where they should be at the end of a movement.

Planning A Program

Plan ahead.

- Consider your goals for the evening - what do you want to accomplish?

- Larry Edelman says- "Ask these questions (in order):
  - What can the dancers do?
  - What do they want to do?
  - What do I want them to do?"

- Leave time for socializing; provide dances which encourage social interaction. An evening with only partner swings can be deadly.

- The flow of the evening is a reflection of the caller's personal style. The caller shapes the evening and unites the dancers, musicians, and his/herself. Develop your own style and program an evening you would like to dance.

When programming, consider the following:

- A variety of dance styles - contras, squares, circles, set dances, couple dances, triplets, etc. Even within contra dancing alone there can be a variety - improper, proper, Becket, triple minor, mixers. Used wisely, variety is the spice of an evening!
- A variety of music styles. Know your band before you start to program. Ask questions of dance organizers it you've never heard them before. If your band is versatile, ask for a mix of jigs, reels, marches, hornpipes. You should tell them what you want before you walk thru each dance. If you want something really special or different, tell them before the dance begins or during the break.
- Program a mixer early in the evening.
- Plan developmentally for maximum fun and minimum teaching.
- Remember that easy dances can be fun, too.
- Consider decreasing the difficulty level again in the middle of the second half. As the evening grows late, dancers are often tired and not ready for another "brain strain"
- New and familiar dances are equally appreciated by dancers.

If your program isn't working, throw it out!!!

- Always bring extra dances with you - some harder and some easier than the program you've planned. You'll be amazed at how often you'll use them.

Working With Live Music

Music is the most important part of an evening!

- The band will be your partner - you must dance together on the stage, leading and following when appropriate.
- Larry Edelman says, "Train the band. Let the band train you."

Every band has a designated "leader."

- Find out who that person is and introduce yourself before the dance begins. Clarify how you will communicate during the dance.

Communication is the most important part of any partnership.

- Be clear, concise, and consistent in your questions, answers, requests, and signals.

- Be sure everyone understands what the signals are for beginning, number of times until the end, and ending.

- Give the band plenty of notice about what kind of tune you want. It may take them your entire walk-thru to make a decision on what they want to play.Some band leaders will want to see your card to help them choose a tune. Some won't.

- Be clear about setting tempos. If it feels too fast or slow, make contact with the band "leader" and show them what you want by conducting, tapping, etc.

- Different bands like different kinds of notice about how long until the end of the dance. I try to set the standard of 3 times through - some bands only like to know at 1 time through! Some like to know at least 5 times before. Ask!

- If your musicians have just switched to a new tune, give them the courtesy of playing it at least three times through before you end the dance.

- Don't ask a band to play music they are not comfortable with. For example, most old-time string bands do not play jigs! Likewise, most northern-type bands do not play music for southern squares. Again, you need to communicate to find out.

Contracts and Ethics

For certain events, written contracts are appropriate and important.

- Many dance organizers use contracts when booking out-of-town callers or bands as a way of communicating and covering the bases in case of no-shows.

As a caller, you may wish to design your own contract for private events and parties.

- Certain organizations will request that you send them one so that they have a record for their accounting.
- Using a contract ensures that everyone knows and remembers what is expected.

An acknowledged email stating time, date, location, etc. can serve as a legally binding written contract.

When you agree to plan/coordinate/call at an event, there are many things to keep in mind. Here are some criteria:

- How much you should charge is often based on your experience as a caller and your responsibilities at and before the event.
- Do you want a deposit? Why?
- Bringing
- What are your responsibilities? Are you booking the band? The sound system?
- How far do you have to travel? What are your expenses?
- Is the job outdoors? Is there a rain date? Are you booking yourself for two dates at the price of one?

The IRS and Accounting

Your income from calling is considered self-employment income and should be reported on IRS Schedule C.

If you make more than $600 in any one year from any one organization, you will receive a 1099 form filed with the IRS. You may be required to pay self-employment tax to Social Security by submitting form SE. Check the directions on your 1040 form.

If you report your income on schedule C, you may take appropriate deductions and could even show a net loss for tax purposes. Deductible expenses may include automobile mileage or airfare to dances, tolls, parking fees, photocopying, advertising, postage, dues to CDSS, subscriptions to dance and music periodicals, depreciation and insurance on a PA system, business phone calls, dance books and recordings, tuition and travel expenses to attend courses and dance weeks. Consult an accountant and begin now to keep appropriate records and receipts of all your business finances.

SAMPLE CONTRACT

ROBBIN MARCUS
Traditional Dance Leader
22 Any Street
Baltimore, MD 21209
[redacted]

Thank you for inviting me to call a dance for your group. Please sign and date one copy of this confirmation and return to me as soon as possible along with a deposit if one is indicated below. Keep the other copy for your records.

Signed_____**Date**_____

Contact: Charlie Brown

Email Address: CharlieBrown@peanuts.com

Cell phone: [redacted]
Work phone:

Organization/Event: Daydream Society/ Conference Banquet

Date of Event: Saturday, March 23, 2026
Time: 7:00 PM until: 11:00 PM
Caller/Band will arrive by: 6: 30 PM

Location: Fairview Park Marriott, Falls Church, VA

Fee: $500.00 Deposit: $50.00 Balance Due: $450.00 *

Remarks:

- The band will arrive earlier than the caller to play background music during the banquet.
- The Daydream Society is responsible for providing a sound system.
- The balance due should be divided as follows: Robbin Marcus, $100.00; Lucy Van Pelt, $175.00; Schroder $175.00.

All fees must be paid by cash or check no later than the end of the dance. If I am providing the sound, an electrical outlet no more than 50 feet from the stage is required. Please feel free to call me if you have any questions. Looking forward to seeing you at the dance!

[redacted]

Checklist for a Contra Dance

Date & time: _____ **Location/Address:** _____

Organizer Name and contact: _____

Musicians: _____ **Sound Tech :** _____

Prior to the gig:

- ❑ Find out all details – where, when (date & time), who (playing and dancing), what type of dancers
- ❑ Get directions to the hall! special parking considerations - arrival time?
- ❑ Understand expectations of organizers – types of dances, who the target audience will be
- ❑ Discuss money up front – write down what you will be paid
- ❑ Get a phone/email contact for the band
- ❑ Pack a recording device to record walkthrus and calling (optional)

Ask the organizer / contact / scheduler the following questions:

- ❑ When and how long is the break(s)?
- ❑ When are announcements?
- ❑ Do they have a tradition of couples dances at certain times– waltz, hambo, swing?
- ❑ When does the dance end and what type of ending: sharp at 11, loosely before 11:30, or other?
- ❑ Special traditions at beginning, at half, or end of evening?
- ❑ Beginners workshop? What is the length/time for it? Will you be teaching it?
- ❑ Terminology: Gypsy? or _____ Ladies/gents? or _____
- ❑ Take hands on R&L through? _____ Default star is pack saddle/wrist or hands across? _____
- ❑ What is your policy on lifts and dips on the dance floor? How enforced?
- ❑ If a dancer were to report a grievance to me (about another dancer), who should I refer them to?

At the beginning of the evening:

- ❑ Get there early – around sound check for the band is good or hour before the dance starts
- ❑ Talk to sound tech- sound check for caller?
- ❑ Get accustomed to the microphone and stand, determine where to stand.
- ❑ Talk to the evening's coordinator. Find out: Anything special going on? Birthday? Anniversary? Special recognition?
- ❑ Last minute changes to program, band, other events intersecting?
- ❑ Ask above questions again: when are announcements, breaks, how long, evening ends when, etc.
- ❑ Where are light switches and/or circuit breakers

Talk with the band before the evening starts:

- ❑ Who in the band do you communicate with – band leader, guitar player, piano player, all of them?
- ❑ Potatoes - Start with 4 potatoes? 8 potatoes? no potatoes? weird potatoes? Who does the potatoes?
- ❑ How to end a dance – do they want to know "2 times through", "1 time through," "3 times through," just tell us at the end of B2?
- ❑ Define "ending right here, immediately NOW!" versus "ending at the end of this phrase"
- ❑ I will give tempo before every dance, you can follow it or ignore it. How do you change tempo? Who sets tempo?
- ❑ Show hand signal for "This is the A1 of the dance", tapping top of head.
- ❑ Do they want to see the dance card, have a description of the dance, simply adjectives, or nothing?

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- ❑ Do they want to see the dance card, have a description of the dance, simply adjectives, or nothing?
- ❑ What types of music do they play – reels only, jigs, hornpipes, swing music, etc.?
- ❑ When you call squares how will you end the square? What speed to do you want them?
- ❑ How the evening will flow – number of dances, etc. Try for 1 walk-thru, call about 8 minutes.

Before each dance:

- ❑ Talk to band about the dance. Also, set tempo? If dance is challenging, ask for clear phrasing.
- ❑ Give dancers time to socialize a bit; if they aren't listening, perhaps they need more time to socialize.
- ❑ Push button to audio record the walk thru and first couple times through the dance
- ❑ Do they need to cross over? Remind them to do this.
- ❑ Double check they have hands-4 all the way to the bottom b4 you start any sort of walk-through.
- ❑ Tell them exactly what they need in a walk-through, but no more.
- ❑ After the walk-through (before the music starts) remind the dancers of the first move, e.g. "Starts with a neighbor allemande right". This reminds the dancers of the first move. This is also insurance against strange or shaky potatoes.

After each dance:

- ❑ Immediately tell dancers the next formation (especially if it is a waltz, a square or a strange formation)
- ❑ Remind people to dance with people they have never seen before, or be aware of those sitting out
- ❑ Step away from the mic while not talking
- ❑ Show the band leader the card for the dance, or tell them what type of feeling you are looking for
- ❑ Tell the band if this or a soon upcoming dance is a no-walk-through or rolling start so they can be ready

During the Evening:

- ❑ Acknowledge the musicians by name – without whom this would be dancing to dead music
- ❑ Thank the newcomers – they are the future of the dance. Plan the first part of your evening with them in mind, and they will keep coming back!
- ❑ Thank the band
- ❑ Acknowledge organizers, coordinators, front desk, the people who put in the work for the dance series
- ❑ If musicians have product to sell, mention this – it is a courtesy, and has more punch coming from you
- ❑ Acknowledge the sound techs – without whom the dance would be 20-30 people
- ❑ Did I mention thank the band?

At the end of the evening:

- ❑ Publicly acknowledge the sound tech and band one more time
- ❑ Remind dancers to help clean up, and look for all belongings (purse, shoes, stray children, etc)
- ❑ Remind dancers about after party or gathering, if one.
- ❑ Remind dancers about the next dance

Emergency Procedures:

- ❑ Address of location to provide to 911 _____
- ❑ Location of exits _____ Location of fire alarm & hoses _____
- ❑ Location of AED/Defibrillator _____
- ❑ Location of land line phone _____

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TIPS FOR CALLERS

Two Experts Speak from the Past

Ralph Page (in Northern Junket, vol. 3, no. 11, March 1953):

1. Don't drink on the job.
2. Be able to do the dances well yourself, for the better dancer you are, the better caller you ought to be.
3. Don't allow your parties to degenerate into brawls.
4. Keep your temper. Smile, even if it kills you to do so.
5. Have patience. Remember that you too had to learn
6. Don't call dances that are beyond the ability of most of your dancers.They are not the least bit interested in how much you know.
7. Don't talk too much. People came to dance, not to listen to you chant a mess of doggerel.
8. Admit a mistake. Laugh at it, and don't let it get your goat. Remember this: the person who never makes a mistake is a person who never does anything.
9. Practice. Practice. Practice.
10. Never be satisfied with just getting by.

Ralph and Zora Piper of Minneapolis, in 1956, quoting Charley Thomas from a talk he gave in 1952:

1. Clarity in speech
2. Rhythm
3. Timing
4. Command
5. Enthusiasm
6. Voice Quality
7. Musical Ability
8. Enjoyability – Create a balanced, varied program that appeals to all.
9. Teaching Ability [added by the Pipers]

Be honest with yourself - find your weakest element and work on it, then your next weakest, and so on.

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BROKEN SIXPENCE

Improper Beginner Don Armstrong

A1 Do-si-do neighbor (8)
Two Larks do-si-do (8)
A2 Two Robins do-si-do (8)
Ones swing in center (8)
B1 Down the center four in line, tum alone (8)
Come back up, bend line (8)
B2 Circle left 1x (8)
Left hand star 1x to next (8) -
• (alternate ending - twos swing, end facing up to new neighbors)

SHADRACK'S DELIGHT

Imp. Int. Tony Parkes

A1 Do si do neighbor, then take right hands to form a wavy line of four (Robins in center) (8)
Balance, allemande right ½ (8)
A2 Balance, larks turn left 1/2 to partner, swing partner (16)
B1 Down the hall four in line, turn as couples come back and hand cast around (16)
B2 Right and left through
Robins chain

THE MARIPOSA

Sic. Cir. or contra Beg. Fred Breunig

A1 Right hand star with neighbors (8)
Left hand star with neighbors (8)
A2 Do-si-do neighbor (8)
Do-si-do partner (8)
B1 Take partner's inside hand to make an arch,
Then ones arch and twos go through,
Twos arch and ones back through (16)
B2 Circle left ½
Swing partner, end facing new neighbors.

SCOUT HOUSE REEL

Impr. Int. Ted Sanella

A1 Down center 4 in line with ones in the center
Turn alone, come back, bend the line
A2 Circle L (8), Robins Chain ½ (8)
B1 Robins do-si-do 1 ½ (8)
To swing neighbor (8)
B2 Long lines forward and back (8)
Ones swing and end facing down (8)

LADY OF THE LAKE

Improper Beginner Traditional

A1 Balance and Swing Neighbor (16)
A2 Ones balance and swing (16)
B1 Ones down the center, turn alone (8)
Come back, cast off with neighbor (8)
B2 Robins chain over and back (16)

SMALL POTATOES

Improper Beginner Jim Kitch

A1 Balance and Swing Neighbor (16),
end facing across the set
A2 Circle Left 1x (8)
Robins chain over (8)
B1 Robins do-si-do (8)
Swing partner, end facing across (8)
B2 Circle Left ¾, pass through to a new couple (8)
Do-si-do your new neighbor (8) (Be ready to swing the same person at A1.)

TECUMSEH

Improper Beginner Dillon Bustin

A1 Twos half figure eight up around the ones. (8)
Twos swing in the center, end facing up. (8)
A2 Circle left (8)
Circle right (8)
B1 Ones half figure eight down through the twos.(8)
Ones swing in the center, end facing down. (8)
B2 Lines of 4 go down the hall, BACK UP,
No turn, ones arch and send the twos through to the next couple (everyone walk forward!)

DANCES FROM ROBBIN MARCUS

Dance:

Author:

Formation:

Suggested Tunes:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Intro								
A1								
A2								
B1								
B2								

A1:

A2:

B1:

B2:

Dance: Family Contra

Author: Sherry Nevins

Formation: duple minor

Suggested Tunes: driving reels

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Intro							BALance in a	RING
A1			BALance	AGAIN	CIRcle	LEFT	ALL the	WAY
					IN a	RING	BALance	NOW
A2			BALance	AGAIN	CIRcle	RIGHT	ALL a	ROUND
					WITH your	NEIGHbor	DO si	DO
B1					WITH your	PARTner	DO si	DO
					AS a	COUPle	DO si	DO
B2					KEEP	ON	GOING	NOW
					NEW	COUPle	BALance in a	RING

Family Contra, by Sherry Nevins

A1: Balance in a ring 2x (8); Circle left (8)

A2: Balance in a ring 2x (8); Circle right (8)

B1: Neighbor Do Si Do (8); Partner Do Si Do (8)

B2: As a couple, Neighbor Do Si Do 1.5 (16)

Dance: Family Contra in the Castle

Author: Seth Tepfer Formation: duple minor Suggested Tunes: driving reels

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Intro							BALance in a	RING
A1			BALance	AGAIN	CIRcle	LEFT	ALL the	WAY
					IN a	RING	BALance	NOW
A2			BALance	AGAIN	CIRcle	RIGHT	ALL a	ROUND
					WITH your	NEIGHbor	DO si	DO
B1					WITH your	NEIGHbor	—	SWING
					LONG	LINES	FORward and	BACK
B2					ONES	ONLY	PARTner	SWING
					NEW	COUPle	BALance in a	RING

Family Contra, by Sherry Nevins

A1: Balance in a ring 2x (8); Circle left (8)

A2: Balance in a ring 2x (8); Circle right (8)

B1: Neighbor Do Si Do (8); Neighbor Swing (8)

B2: Long lines (8); 1s Swing

Dance: Broken Sixpence

Author: Don Armstrong Formation: improper duple minor Suggested Tunes: driving reels

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Intro							NEIGHbor	DO si do
A1					ROBins	ONLY	DO si	DO
					LARKS	ONLY	DO si	DO
A2					ONES	PARtner	SWING	NOW
					DOWN the	HALL	FOUR in	LINE
B1					TURN	ALone and	COME back	UP
					BEND the	LINE and	CIRcle	LEFT
B2					LEFT	HAND	STAR	NOW
			say	*goodbye*	NEW	NEIGHbor	DO si	Do

Broken Sixpence, Don Armstrong

A1: Neighbor DSD (8); Robins DSD (8)

A2: Larks DSD (8); 1s swing (8)

B1: Down the hall, turn alone (8); return, bend line (8)

B2: Circle Left (8); left hand star (8)

Dance: Broken Dollar

Author: Seth Tepfer Formation: improper duple minor Suggested Tunes: marchy

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Intro							NEIGHbor	DO si do
A1					ROBins	ONLY	DO si	DO
					LARKS	ONLY	DO si	DO
A2					NEIGH	BOR	SWING	NOW
					DOWN the	HALL	FOUR in	LINE
B1					TURN	ALone and	COME back	UP
					BEND the	LINE and	CIRcle	LEFT
B2					IN a	RING	BALance	NOW
	Twos	arch	*Ones*	*Dive*	NEW	NEIGHbor	DO si	Do

Broken Dollar, Seth Tepfer, improper contra

A1: Neighbor DSD (8); Robins DSD (8)

A2: Larks DSD (8); Neighbor swing (8)

B1: Down the hall, turn alone (8); return, bend line (8)

B2: Circle Left (8); ring balance (4), 2s arch 1s dive through (4)

Dance: Simplicity Swing

Author: Becky Hill

Formation: duple minor improper

Suggested Tunes: driving reels

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Intro							BALance and	SWING
A1					KEEP	ON	SWINGing	NOW
					CIRcle	LEFT	THREE	PLACES
A2					WITH your	PARTner	SWING	NOW
					LONG	LINES	FORward &	BACK
B1					ROBINS	CHAIN	ACROSS the	SET
					LEFT	HAND	STAR	NOW
B2					NEW	NEIGHbor	DO si	DO
					THIS	NEIGHbor	BALANCE &	SWING

A1: Neighbor Balance (4); Neighbor Swing (12)

A2: Circle left ¾ (8); partner swing (8)

B1: long lines forward and back (8); robin chain (8)

B2: left hand star (8); new neighbor do si do (8)

ɔnal Circle

ɔnal

Formation: Circle Suggested Tunes: driving reels

3	4	5	6	7	8
				CIRcle	LEFT
		BACK to the	RIGHT the	OTHER way	BACK
		INto the	MIDdle and	COME back	OUT
		DO it	aGAIN with a	WHOOP and a	SHOUT
		WITH your	CORner	DO si	DO
		SWING your	CORner	ROUND you	KNOW
		PROMenade	aROUND	THE	RING
		PROMenade	aROUND	I	SING
		JOIN	HANDS and	CIRcle to the	LEFT

rcle Right

(8) Corner Swing
ner (new partner)

Dance: Mad Robin in Love

Author: Greg Frock Formation: improper contra Suggested Tunes: smooth minor jigs

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Intro							NEIGHbor	DO si do
A1					WITH your	NEIGHbor	SWING	NOW
					LONG	LINES	FORward &	BACK
A2					GENTS	FORward	MAD	ROBin
					GENTS	PASS	LEFT	SHOULDer
B1			PARTner	SWING				
					CIRcle	LEFT	THREE	PLACES
B2					IN a	RING	BALance	NOW
	With your	part ner	California	TWIRL	NEW	NEIGHbor	DO si	DO

A1: (8) Neighbor Do si do; (8) Neighbor Swing

A2: (8) Long lines; (8) Mad Robin, clockwise, larks forward and right to start, robins back and left to start

B1: (4) larks cross pass left; (12) partner swing

B2: (8) circle left 3 places; (4) bal ring, (4) Partner CA Twirl

Dance: Tica Tica Timing

Author: Dean Snipes Formation: Becket Suggested Tunes: bouncy jigs

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Intro							CIRcle to the	LEFT
A1	*(three*	*Places)*			WITH your	NEIGHbor	SWING	AROUND
					PROMend	ADE	ACROSS the	SET
A2					ROBins	CHAIN	ACROSS the	SET
					HANDS in a	RING	BALance	NOW
B1			SPIN to the	RIGHT			BALance	NOW
			SPIN to the	RIGHT			BALance the	RING
B2			PARtner	SWIN G				
					NEXT	COUPle	CIRcle	LEFT

A1: Circle Left ¾ (8); Neighbor Swing (8)

A2: Promenade across (8); Robins chain (8)

B1: Balance the ring (4), petronella spin (4); Balance the ring (4), petronella spin (4)

B2: Balance the ring (4), partner swing (12); slide left to next couple

Dance: Summer of '84 (variation)

Author: Gene Hubert Formation: Improper Suggested Tunes: bouncy jigs

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Intro							LONG	LINES
A1					LARKS	LEFT	TO your	PARTner
					RIGHT to your	PARTner	BALance	NOW
A2			WALK to your	SHAdow			BALance	NOW
			ALLemande	RIGHT	WITH your	PARTner	BALance &	SWING
B1					*keep*	*on*	*swingin*	*now*
					PROMen	ADE a	CROSS the	SET
B2					ROBins	CHAIN	aCROSS the	SET
					LONG	LINES	FORward &	BACK

A1: (8) long lines; (8) larks allemande left 1.5

A2: (4) balance short waves; (4) walk forward to new wave, shadow in right hand; (4) balance waves, (4) shadow allemande right to partner

B1: (16) partner balance and swing

B2: (8) promenade across set; (8) Robins chain

Dance: Hey in Barn

Author: Chart Guthrie Formation: improper Suggested Tunes: driving reels

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Intro							BALance &	SWING
A1					KEEP	ON	SWINGing	NOW
					ROBins	CHAIN	TO your	PARTner
A2					ROBins	RIGHT	HALF a	HEY
					WITH your	PARTner	BALance &	SWING
B1					KEEP	ON	SWINGing	NOW
					ROBins	CHAIN	TO your	NEIGHbor
B2					ROBins	RIGHT	HALF a	HEY
					NEXT	NEIGHbor	BALance and	SWING

A1: Neighbor Balance and Swing (16)
A2: Robins chain (8); Robins pass right, half a hey (8)
B1: Partner Balance and Swing (16)
B2: robins chain (8); Robins pass right, half a hey (8)

Dance: Kitchen Stomp

Author: Becky Hill Formation: improper Suggested Tunes: bouncy jigs

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Intro								
A1								
A2								
B1								
B2								

A1: (4)Neighbor Balance, (12) Neighbor Swing

A2: (8) larks Allemande Left 1&1/2; (8) Partner Swing

B1: (8) robins Chain; (4) in a ring Balance, (4) petronella twirl

B2: (4) Balance Ring, (4) Petronella Twirl; (8) left hand star

Dance: The Carousel

Author: Tom Hinds Formation: duple minor improper Suggested Tunes: Smooth jigs

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Intro								
A1								
A2								
B1								
B2								

A1: (8) long lines forward and back; (8) robins allemande left 1.5 to partner

A2: (16) pass partner right for full hey for four

B1: (16) partner balance and swing

B2: (8) circle left three places; (8) neighbor swing

Dance: Another Last Dance

Author: Erik Hoffman Formation: duple minor improper Suggested Tunes: driving reels

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Intro								
A1								
A2								
B1								
B2								

A1: (8) Neighbor Do Si Do; (8) robins allemande left once and a half

A2: (4) partner balance; (12) Partner Swing

B1: (8) circle left three places; (8) neighbor swing

B2: (8) long lines forward and back; (8) left hand star

Dance: Awesome Double Progression Dance

Author: Donna Calhoun Formation: improper Suggested Tunes: driving reels

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Intro								
A1								
A2								
B1								
B2								

A1 (8) 1s in the middle, down the hall four in line, turn alone (8) come back up, bend the line

A2 (8) circle left (8) left hand star

B1 (16) NEXT neighbor balance and swing

B2 (8) LLFB (8) 1s only swing

Playlist for Callers Music Workshop [redacted]

Medley/Tune names	Recording	Artists	Time	Type
Y'all March/March 4th	Reelplay website	Reelplay (Robbin and Dave)	3:20	March
March of the Lost Boys	Reelplay website	Reelplay, Tune by George Paul	4:59	March
On the Danforth	Sashay the Donut	NE Dancing Masters	5:51	March
Stronger than Dirt	Stronger than Dirt	The Avant Gardeners	3:25	March
Dominion Reel/Fishers Hornpipe	Chimes of Dunkird	NE Dancing Masters	5:46	Reels
Quebec Reel/Reel St Blondine/Pacific Slope	Any Jig or Reel	Becky Tracy, Keith Murphy, Andy Davis	6:12	Reels
Irish Reel Medley	Listen to the Mockingbird	NE Dancing Masters	5:39	Reels
Old Time Reel Medley	Sashay the Donut	NE Dancing Masters	7:57	Reels
Hangman's Reel	Uncle Gizmo	Uncle Gizmo (Larry Unger, etc)	3:51	Reels
Wizard's Walk/Red Crow	Sashay the Donut	NE Dancing Masters	5:11	Reels
Golden Keyboard/McDowell's/Union St	Any Jig or Reel	Becky Tracy, Keith Murphy, Andy Davis	7:41	Reels
Broken Lantern/Mist Over Tenessee/Idlewild Ji	Any Jig or Reel	Becky Tracy, Keith Murphy, Andy Davis	5:41	Jigs
Ingonish/Heritage/Green Fields of Woodford	Any Jig or Reel	Becky Tracy, Keith Murphy, Andy Davis	5:42	Jigs
Irish Jig Medley	Sashay the Donut	NE Dancing Masters	5:24	Jigs
The Goldfinch/April Storm	Reelplay website	Reelplay (Robbin and Dave)	3:43	Jigs
Winter Oranges	Reelplay website	Reelplay, Tune by Daron Douglas	3:53	Jigs
Bridget's Back in Town/Rockabye Baby	Uncle Gizmo	Uncle Gizmo (Larry Unger, etc)	5:06	Jig to Reel
The Roaring Barmaid/Lady Anne Montgomery	Tulip Bandits	The Avant Gardeners	5:05	Jig to Reel

Good Restaurants that we can Walk To from the YWCA

1. El Barrio $$-$$$

Address: 2211 2nd Ave N, Birmingham, AL 35203
Phone: (205) 868-3737 Call to see if you can get in.
Walking distance: ~0.6 miles (~12–14 min walk)
Food: Creative *multi-regional Mexican-inspired* cuisine with tacos, enchiladas, quesadillas, seafood, seasonal dishes, and inventive cocktails in a lively, casual yet elevated setting.

2. Trattoria Zaza $$

Address: 207A 20th St N, Birmingham, AL 35203
Phone: (205) 202-6207
Walking distance: ~0.5 miles (~10 min walk)
Food: Casual Italian with *Roman-style pizza by the slice*, pastas, salads, soups, and weekend brunch favorites (e.g., mascarpone French toast). Known for light, flavorful pizzas and cozy vibe.

3. Lé Fresca $$-$$$

Address: 2218 2nd Ave N, Birmingham, AL 35203
Phone: (205) 593-4241
Walking distance: ~0.6 miles (~12 min walk)
Food: Italian-inspired *wine bar and kitchen* with pizzas, pasta, and small plates; great for casual dinner with wine or cocktails alongside classic Italian fare.

4. Paramount - Downtown Birmingham $$

Address: 200 20th St N, Birmingham, AL 35203
Phone: (205) 320-2824
Walking distance: ~0.4 miles (~8 min walk)
Food: *Bar grub and comfort classics* — burgers, wings, fries, sandwiches — in an *arcade-bar* environment. Vibe is casual and fun, great for groups.

5. Bamboo on 2nd $$

Address: 2212 2nd Ave N, Birmingham, AL 35203
Phone: (205) 703-0551
Walking distance: ~0.6 miles (~12 min walk)
Food: *Pan-Asian fusion* with sushi rolls, noodle bowls, Asian-inspired small plates and creative dishes in a relaxed downtown setting.

6. EastWest $$-$$$

Address: 2306 2nd Ave N, Birmingham, AL 35203
Phone: (205) 593-4232
Walking distance: ~0.7 miles (~14 min walk)
Food: *Asian fusion* with creative dishes blending Eastern (Chinese/Japanese/Thai) with Western influences — think unique takes on noodles, proteins, and inventive plates complemented by cocktails.

7. Brick & Tin $$

Address: 214 20th St N, Birmingham, AL 35203
Phone: (205) 297-8636
Walking distance: ~0.5 miles (~10 min walk)
Food: Casual *farm-to-table café* with fresh soups, salads, sandwiches, and seasonal fare; a local favorite for lunch or light dinner with quality ingredients.

8. SALUD $$

Address: 1931 2nd Ave N, Ste 101, Birmingham, AL 35203
Phone: (659) 281-7320
Walking distance: ~0.5 miles (~10 min walk)
Food: *Elevated taqueria* with tacos, burritos, tortas, and vibrant Mexican flavors with creative twists; lively atmosphere downtown. (Local recommendations note tacos & burritos here as standout.)

9. Frothy Monkey $$-$$$

Address: 2320 Second Ave N, Birmingham, AL 35203
Phone: (205) 974-3600
Walking distance: ~0.7 miles (~14–15 min walk)
Food: *All-day cafe* with specialty coffee, brunch, sandwiches, salads, pastries, and dinner options; relaxed vibe great for breakfast, lunch, or lingering with drinks.

10. The Pizitz Food Hall $$

The Pizitz Food Hall
Address: 1821 2nd Ave N #3112, Birmingham, AL 35203
Phone: (205) 214-9999
Walking distance: ~0.8 miles (~15–17 min walk) from 309 23rd St N
Food: An **indoor food hall/food court** with *multiple independent food stalls* offering diverse options — burgers & hot dogs at *The Standard*, Vietnamese/Pho/Ramen stalls, poke bowls, Indian street-food (Silver Kati), Thai, tacos, ice cream & shakes, and more